WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD OF ART

THE modern god of fashion ranks second only to the god of love in power to sway modern men (Cupid being all that is now left to us from the Greeks) and no matter how we laugh at either we always yield to both. The deities of fashion and democracy are closely allied, although our essayists have not yet studied the connection, and Queen Mary is quite right from the point of view of her personal, royal, and, alas, dwindling, prerogatives to frown as she does upon "the mode." But it is not so much the question of Queen Mary's rights and wrongs that interests us here as it is the special fashion that is flourishing among our liberty loving fellow citizens and which has so quickly affected the arts. I refer, of course, to the Spanish craze.

Just who planted the Spanish fashion and whence the seed was obtained I do not know, but I suspect that the whole affair has been managed here. Should this be so we may congratulate ourselves. It would mark the beginning of a real renaissance.

Fashion, so the deep thinkers aver, is a fetter, but since we must wear fetters it is surely better to forge the links ourselves. We may not be nearer than before to the condition that breeds characters of great originality, but at least in putting on outer garments that we have chosen ourselves, and without a thought of what Sackville street or the Rue de la Paix would consider fit, we go a long way toward acquiring an outward national tone.

Laugh, if you like, at the Goyescan flavor of this, our first effort at national tone, but I say it is very well, and by next winter, if we maintain this noble independence, we may even embark in a quite new fashion that is reminiscent of nothing ever before seen in the heavens above or the sea beneath. Certain futurist painters are quite hopeful upon this point. If the Goya influence be followed by a Greco craze, for instance, then look out! After that the futuristic deluge!

In the meantime women are wearing modified Spanish; new dancers from Seville arrive on every boat; the guitars and mandolins in the studios are being dusted off and strummed; there is "Goyescas" at the opera, and a new publication about Goya just issued by the Hispanic Society of America.

All this unescapable machinery starts us to thinking of Goya whether we wish it or not. We haul down the reference books from our library shelves, and once the reading is begun, whether it be Mr. Starkweather's new brochure, just printed by the Hispanic Society, or Mr. Stokes's earlier publication (G. P. Putnam's Sons), it is pursued with eagerness to the final phrase, for Goya as an artist and as a human document is equally remarkable.

For one thing he was a hero, alike to other artists and the public. Not even the greater Velasquez cut so wide a swash through life. As an athlete he was superb, being considered one of the best amateur bullfighters of his time; as a Don Juan he equalled Byron, and as for fortune, he became court painter and rich. So all round a success suggests a character in a novel, and in fact his life reads like one. To make Americans realize the man he was it would be necessary to boil down into one Col. Roosevelt, Ferdinand Pinney Earle and Enrico Caruso. The residuum would make a Goya.

Since we have fashions and are influenced by them, nothing could be better than for our artists to emulate Goya.

WILD HORSE HUNTERS, BY CHARLES M. RUSSELL.
On exhibition, Folsom Galleries.

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NELLY KABEL, BY GARI MELCHERS.
Exhibition at Montross Gallery.

"Goya founded no school," writes Mr. Starkweather, "his art was too personal, too much the direct expression of his own strange temperament," and for that reason he is an excellent god for the temporary worship of young painters. His manner cannot be acquired because it is too volatile, but his spirit is catching.

One turns again to nature after glancing through a Goya portfolio with renewed faith in her inexhaustibility. No painter more continually improvises or has more of the quality of "chic" (costumes and artists do not agree as to the meaning of the word "chic"), and all of our artists who have academical turns of mind will benefit greatly from following the Goya fashion. To "chic" splendidly is indeed a splendid faculty.

Mr. Starkweather takes a sensible tone in regard to the picturesque scandals that cling thickly to the Goya tradition. Goya was not a saint of course, but there is no use in believing all of the amusing stories one hears just because they are amusing. The gossip that insisted that the Duchess of Alba posed for both the celebrated pictures that hang in the Prado, "The Maja Desnuda" and "The Maja Vestida," has been whispered so assiduously and embroidered so beautifully that now we might make a whole play of that episode alone, but Mr. Starkweather reduces the story to the minimum and insists that it is unsupported by any evidence.

It is not impossible that Goya's model presented that combination so unhappily familiar to artists of a beautiful body with a commonplace head; to have remedied this lack of facial charm Goya may have introduced into the features either consciously or unconsciously some traces of the type of the Duchess whom he had painted so often and whose features he knew so well.

This is plausible. Especially since Goya was a master of the "chic" and could do anything with a great effect of realism out of his head. No one who has the faintest conception of the tricks of the trade but can see how easily Goya may have managed the resemblances in these two pictures without a pose. They will understand too how it may have been unconscious. An ideal of beauty is often very fixed, and many artists repeat the same type without knowing it. A local example that my readers will recall is the long series by Mr. Gibson that finally were called Gibson Girls.

But Baudelaire, the poet, believed the story implicitly, and Lady Holland in 1805 credited every frailty that was alleged of the Duchess, although she confessed that neither the Duchess of Alba nor the Duchess of Osuna ever "wantonly" violated decency in their conversation or deportment. The Duchess of Alba was much too ardent, beautiful and brilliant to be greatly believed in by her own sex. All her champions have been men. The fact that Goya was 50 years old and partially deaf at the time of this affair even convinces them, as it did Von Loga, that the entire friendship was platonic.

We may at least therefore drape the mantle of charity over the Maja Desnuda that looks so strangely like Goya's great friend. "The identity of the Majas," as Hugh Stokes writes, "must remain a secret, which future biographers are not likely to unravel." It will be repeated as long as Goya's name is known, for it is too piquant to be forgotten, but one need not believe in the actual indiscretion.

As for the intrigue itself, that is a matter that the sympathetic male admirers of the Duchess find more difficult to explain away. For one thing, almost all of the portraits bear in themselves sufficient evidence of the painter's tendresse, and not the least is the beautiful canvas owned by the Hispanic Society, for in this picture the Duchess wears two rings, one of which is engraved "Alba" and the other "Goya," and with her jewelled finger she points to the ground where the dedication by the artist to the Duchess is written. So open an alliance between sitter and artist has not elsewhere been recorded. Its very openness may, however, have been a hint of the insignificance attached to it. In any case enough is actually known of the

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THE OPEN FIRE,
BY GARI MELCHERS.
Exhibition at Montross Gallery.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI, BY EL GRECO.
Exhibition, Durand-Ruel Galleries.

Duchess to persuade us that she was not the sort of a lady to permit rumors of the sort to greatly trouble her in her last sleep.

Mr. Starkweather's Goya essay may be recommended as being clear, concise and sound, and the comments upon the drawings and paintings belonging to the Hispanic Society are illuminating. The life of Goya, by Hugh Stokes, that has been referred to is a veritable storehouse of all the facts and legends that have become associated with the again fashionable artist.

The Goya that is in "Goyescas" at the opera is all in the music. The settings are pretty and there has been some admiration expressed for the way they were lighted, but it must be confessed that the lights were not managed precisely as a painter would have managed them and that "Goya effects" were consequently missing. The crowds in the two first scenes were carefully arranged so that everybody in the audience could see everybody on the stage; yet in the delineation of crowds artists are wiser than stage managers, for they know that it is essential not to see every face in the mob. Goya would have flung deeper shadows, perhaps, on groups in the foreground, and quieted the mass of people at the back so that the central actors would have dominated. He would also have employed the trick that the Ballet Russe so frequently uses, of extending the crowd into the lateral wings, and the view of something interesting that is tantalizingly cut off from one suggests, as nothing else will, a sense of reality and bigness to the picture. Often at the Ballet Russe no matter which seat you chose you cut yourself off from certain horizons. Artists in painting always work in the same manner. What painter would dare thin out the interest just because he is nearing the picture frame?

The stage manager who forgets this point calls attention to the rectangularity of the stage setting and destroys the illusion he is aiming for. It applies not only to the grouping of stage crowds but to the general arrangement of stage architecture.

One reason the manager hated to put too many of his people into shadows was that most of them were so nice. The costumes were copied from the paintings and were most attractively of the period. Only one detail in them was not as I would have wished. The shoes of the Duchess of Alba, or perhaps one should say Rosario, or perhaps Miss Anna Fitziu, were not Goyescan. The Duchess of Alba and all the other wonderful ladies of the Goya tableaux wear curious little shoes with peculiarly rounded soles that must have affected their locomotion. There must have been a "Goya" walk.

It cannot have been a matter of careless drawing, for Goya knew only too well how to draw, and besides, these funny little shoes are always considered by the amateurs as being immensely distinguished. It is a pity that they could not have been introduced on the stage. It might have started a fashion in these shoes. Since we are starting fashions, we mustn't miss opportunities like that.

The Russian art collector Jacques Zoubaloff, who a short time ago presented to the museum of the Petit-Palais in Paris a fine collection of works by Barye, including models in plaster, in wax and in cire-perdue bronze, has just presented to the same institution eight paintings and seventy-five watercolors by Harpignies. The eight paintings date back in the youth of the artist and were executed between 1852 and 1870. They are mostly souvenirs of Italy, and among them is a view of the Forum that one might have believed to be by Corot. The watercolors, and Harpignies is particularly able in this medium, also include many studies made in the south, but there are among them many admirable views of scenes in Paris.